

Founders' Hall
Athens College (Main Building)
Athens, Alabama

Limestone Co.

HABS No. 16-301

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

FOUNDERS' HALL OF ATHENS COLLEGE
Athens, Limestone County, Alabama.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This building possesses dignity and grandeur, and the portico is well proportioned.

It is very unfortunate that the third story was added in 1905, in place of a pediment which the building originally possessed, and which addition was done in a way that was not in keeping with the general design of the building.

It is recorded that the masonry of the building was laid by slave brick layers from the leading plantation owners around Athens. The Ionic columns and pilasters, used both on the interior and exterior, are of very pure design, and can be seen drawn in detail on the Historic American Buildings Survey sheets. The interior window jambs are unique. They possess a subtle swell rarely found anywhere.

The plan of the original building is direct and utilitarian. It consists of chapel, study-hall, and eight lecture rooms and offices, with circulation provided in a very unusual manner as the drawing shows.

Source of Material:

E. Walter Burkhardt, District Administrator, HABS.
Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama.

(Revised at HABS Headquarters
Feb. 11, 1936 - H.C.F.)

~~(Original sheet in field notebook).~~

Project #16-301
FOUNDERS' HALL OF ATHENS COLLEGE
Athens, Alabama

HISTORICAL DATA:

Built in 1842.
Architect was General Hiram H. Higgins.
Woodwork superintended by Ira E. Hobbs.
Brickwork by James M. Brundidge.

Ownership: Athens College.

Rev. R. H. Rivers, D.D., was the first president.

Mrs. Hamilton Childs :

During the Civil War period, "Madam Childs", as she was called, was the president of Athens College.

"Madam Childs throughout the entire War Between the States, during the almost constant occupation of Athens by Federal Soldiers, was able to operate the school without the slightest molestation. The property was never damaged, nor the privacy of the inmates intruded upon. A skirmish was fought between the Federals and the Confederates only a short distance from the college campus. The students from the upper windows of the building could see the troops advancing and retreating, and one dead man was left in what is known as the Fayetteville Road, the northern boundary of the college property, showing the fatal character of the combat."

This seems to have been the first building of the college, and today is spoken of as the Main Building, or Founders' Hall.

Source of Material:

History of Athens College by Mary Norman Moore,
American Printing Company, Birmingham, Ala., 1916.

Eugene Knight of the measuring force.

Reviewed 1936, H.C.F.